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W I L L I T O N R U R A L D I S T R I C T C O U N C I L

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

FOR THE YEAR 1972.

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WILLITON RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL.
ANNUAL REPORT OF THE MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH
FOR THE YEAR 1972.

To the Chairman and Members of the Council.

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

May I present what will be my penultimate yearly report on the Public Health aspects of the Williton R.D.C. as it is presently constituted.

As you know, the new Councils formed by local government re-organisation in England and Wales will commence to operate in April 1974, and the existing Williton R.D.C. will amalgamate with the three other West Somerset districts to form a larger authority with the proposed title of the West Somerset District Council. Thus 1972 has proved a year of destiny for your district and 1973 will see the last full yearly report on the work of the Williton R.D.C.'s Public Health Department.

1972 has been a busy and interesting year, with some new developments mainly in the field of refuse collection and disposal and some movements affecting the population figures. The report is presented in a form similar to previous years, but with some variation in the order of the various headings. It remains appropriate to commence with Vital Statistics, the figures which give us general information regarding the administration of the district and also the Registrar General's collated information on the births, deaths, and the health conditions as reflected by a list of the notifiable diseases summarised for the year.

These are followed by the summary giving in table form a list of the activities of the Public Health Inspectors which will show the volume and scope of their work; this is amplified under the various headings which follow, in general in the same order as the summary to give a logical connection between the figures and the text.

1. Vital statistics.

Area of the Williton R.D.C.	97,364 acres.
Estimated Mid year Home Population	15,000
Number of Dwelling Houses	5,330
Rateable Value (at 1.4.1972)	£618,724
Estimated Product of a New Penny Rate	£6,000

The rateable value figure is the same as that shown on the report for 1971. It has been felt that the rateable value calculated at the commencement of the year following the production of the previous year's report should be used as being more up to date, but the vastly increased figure for 1973 resulting from the re-rating of all properties would not be an appropriate reflection of the income for 1972, and thus the earlier figure has been repeated. The slight difference in the estimated product for the two years is due to a more accurate estimation for 1972 now being available.

Registrar General's figures for Births and Deaths.

<u>Live Births</u>	<u>Births.</u>		
	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>Total</u>
Legitimate	71	93	164
Illegitimate	10	4	14
	<u>81</u>	<u>97</u>	<u>178</u>

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Vital statistics, cont...

	<u>W.R.D.C.</u>	<u>England & Wales</u>
Crude Birth Rate per 1000 Population	12.9	14.8
Local Adjusted Rate	15.9	14.8
Illegitimate Live Births as % of Total Live Births	8%	9%

<u>Still Births</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>Total</u>
Legitimate	1	2	3
Illegitimate	-	-	-

Rate per 1000 Total Live and Still Births	<u>W.R.D.C.</u>	<u>England & Wales</u>
	17	12

Deaths.

Infant Deaths. There were, as in the previous year, three infant deaths, two males under one year, and one male under four weeks. None was illegitimate.

<u>Infant Mortality Rates.</u>	<u>W.R.D.C.</u>	<u>England & Wales</u>
Total Infant Deaths per 1000 Live Births	11	17
Legitimate Infant Deaths per 1000 Legitimate Live Births	12	17
Illegitimate Infant Deaths per 1000 Illegitimate Live Births	-	21
Deaths under 4 weeks per 1000 Live Births	6	12
" " 1 week " " " "	-	10

<u>Total Deaths.</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>Total</u>
1. Deaths, All Ages.	111	111	222
2. Deaths per 1000 Home Population	<u>W.R.D.C.</u>	<u>England & Wales</u>	
Crude Rate	16.1	12.1	
Local adjusted Rate	11.9	12.1	

3. <u>Causes of Deaths.</u>			
Malignant Neoplasms	44	Diseases of Respiratory System	23
Endocrine Diseases	4	" " Digestive "	7
Diseases of Nervous System	5	Genito-Urinary Diseases	2
Heart Diseases	61	Birth Injuries, etc.	1
Cerebrovascular Disease	46	Congenital Anomalies	2
Other Diseases of Circulatory System	17	Other Infective & Parasitic Diseases	1
All Accidents	2	Symptoms & Ill-defined conditions	2
Suicide and Self-Inflicted Injuries	5		

4. <u>Breakdown of Age Groups.</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>Total</u>
Under 4 weeks	1	-	1
4 weeks to 1 year	2	-	2
1 - 4 years	-	1	1
15 - 24 "	2	-	2
35 - 44 "	1	1	2
45 - 54 "	2	8	10
55 - 64 "	11	7	18
65 - 74 "	44	32	76
75 and over	48	62	110
	<u>111</u>	<u>111</u>	<u>222</u>

Notifiable Diseases.

In view of the formidable list of notifiable diseases against which cases are not recorded, it seems reasonable to list only those for which certificates have been received, and these will be found later in the report. League leaders are again cases of measles, the numbers being almost wholly attributable to an outbreak in the Stogursey area in the early part of the summer. The two cases of food poisoning, a disease which has not been reported in the last two years, were the result of a distinctly unusual event in the general routine of the Public Health Department: this was the arrival late in the year of a large number of Ugandan Asians at the newly titled Doniford Resettlement Camp.

Further mention will be found of the health circumstances at the camp later in the report, but it is apposite to mention briefly here the circumstances which have led to these unfortunate peoples' becoming part of the district's vital statistics. Early in the year, the Ministry of Defence relinquished its interest in Doniford Camp as a military establishment, and after many years' occupation by various branches of the armed services, the camp was evacuated in February and March of 1972. The married quarters at Liddymore remained occupied until June, when the families of the departed regiment also left. These quarters have been reoccupied by families of other military personnel, and thus the Council has no jurisdiction over this area, but the strangely silent barracks at Doniford were soon to become a focus of interest for the Public Health Department with the decision of the Ugandan Resettlement Board to utilise its ready made facilities in housing some of the many thousands of refugees. Thus world events may even impinge on the comparative peace of our truly rural surroundings, and due to the efforts of the Council staff and voluntary organisations, the Asians were speedily absorbed into the community.

I would like to take the opportunity here to express my gratitude to all those who helped to make this operation a success: this includes all those doctors in the area who took part, when every Asian was x-rayed, with excellent results; the Somerset County Nursing Association, the administrative staffs of the various offices, and all the local people who gave so much of their time and efforts, and without whose help we could not have succeeded in our task. I feel I must mention one well known name in particular, that of Nurse Nash, who did not spare herself at all, often working alone and late into the night. Her dedication to what must be described as an errand of mercy, brings fresh credit to the nursing profession.

2. Summary of Complaints Received, Visits Made, And Notices Served in 1972.

	<u>Complaints</u>	<u>Inspections & Revisits</u>	<u>Notices Served</u>
<u>Public Health Acts.</u>			
Drainage and Sewerage	17	147	5
Public Conveniences	1	7	-
Disinfection of Premises	4	12	-
Infectious Diseases	2	25	2
Nuisances	20	46	8
Tented Camping Sites	2	13	2
Watercourses, etc.	3	15	-
Refuse Collection and Disposal	5	392	-
Recurring Sickness	-	1	1
Section 89, Public Conveniences	-	11	2
Disinfestations	12	20	-
Filthy Premises	2	2	-
Doniford Camp (Asians)	-	3	-
Trade Waste	-	1	-
<u>Housing Acts.</u>			
Overcrowding	-	1	-
Defective Conditions	7	37	5
Individual Unfit	1	34	-
Standard Grant	-	29	-
Discretionary Grant	-	298	2
Qualification Certificates	-	23	5
General Conditions	-	2	-
Section 9 Works of Repair	-	2	1
" 277 Requisition for Information	-	-	1
" 17 Closing Order	-	-	1

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<u>Complaints Received, etc., cont.</u>	<u>Complaints.</u>	<u>Inspections & Revisits.</u>	<u>Notices Served.</u>
<u>Food & Drugs Act.</u>			
Food Premises	-	38	13
Mobile Stalls, etc.	-	4	-
Registrations, Section 16	-	2	-
Foreign Bodies & Other Complaints	5	9	2
Inspection of Hairdressing Salon	-	1	-
<u>Factories Acts.</u>			
Mechanical	1	3	1
Non-Mechanical	-	1	-
<u>Slaughterhouses Acts.</u>			
Slaughterhouses	-	12	-
Meat Inspection Visits	-	562	-
<u>Prevention of Damage by Pests Act.</u>			
Business Premises	-	4	-
Agricultural Premises	-	1	-
Domestic Premises	2	9	1
Sewer Treatment	-	3	-
<u>Civic Amenities Act.</u>			
Abandoned Vehicles	10	41	2
Litter	3	3	-
<u>Offices, Shops & Railway Premises Act.</u>			
Offices	-	1	-
Retail Shops	-	9	-
Catering Establishments & Canteens	-	2	-
<u>Caravan Sites, Etc., Acts.</u>			
Residential	-	63	-
Holiday	2	20	-
Gipsy Sites	-	2	-
Exempted site - Caravan Club	-	2	-
<u>Animal Boarding Establishments Act.</u>	-	4	-
<u>Noise Abatement Act.</u>	3	9	1
<u>Water Supplies & Sampling.</u>			
Investigations	7	51	1
Chemical Samples	1	41	1
Bacteriological Samples	-	244	-
<u>Diseases of Animals (Waste Foods) Order.</u>	-	8	-

Public Health Acts.

Drainage and Sewerage.

No further sewerage schemes have been completed in the district since the presentation of my last report, but preparations are now in hand, in addition to the Avill Valley and Bilbrook schemes mentioned last year, at work to be undertaken at Monksilver, West Luccombe, and Church Town, Luxborough. Costings have been prepared for all schemes except the last. It is hoped all schemes will be commenced in 1973.

Requests are still being received for the council either to clean out or assist in the cost of cleaning out cesspools and septic tanks, but owing to difficulties in the hauling and disposal of waste over distances involved, it is not felt practicable to operate a scheme, but that a better long term solution would be to do all possible to abolish the use of this type of drainage.

Complaints received during the year were generally in respect of overflowing tanks fouling adjoining land, and both formal and informal notices were served, in one case instructing an owner to provide an efficient drainage system from a house to a public sewer.

Drainage and Sewerage.

Notice was served on the owner of a farm requiring the provision of an efficient drainage system, including a cesspool where foul water and manure from the farm buildings discharged into a ditch , with the consequent danger of the spread of disease to water courses and neighbouring land.

Infectious Diseases.

Diseases notified during the year were as follows:

Measles	33 cases
Dysentery	1 "
Infective Jaundice	3 "
Food Poisoning	2 "

The two cases of food poisoning concerned members of the Asian community at Doniford settlement Camp, who were mentioned earlier in the report. A man and a woman, employed locally in branches of the food industry, reported symptoms of sickness and diarrhoea and on examination were found to be infected with bacteria of the shigella flexneri and salmonella types. They were immediately suspended from their employment, and the public health inspector concerned undertook a thorough investigation of all contacts of the patients. The woman's sister was also found to be infected and was suspended from work, but all other members of both families were found to be free. After the submission by all patients of three negative stools, they were allowed to return to their employment.

Refuse Collection and Disposal.

There have been several new developments to report on in 1972, in regard to both refuse collection and disposal.

As was mentioned in the report for 1971, williton and Watchet refuse collections were amalgamated on April 1st. 1972, when the R.D.C. took on its strength the Watchet refuse vehicle and driver, and commenced a one day a week collection of the whole of Watchet, the cost of this service to be rechargeable to the Watchet U.D.C. This centralisation of staff and administration has proved to be more efficient and economical, and is a useful step towards the eventual amalgamation of all refuse services in the new West Somerset authority.

Also on April 1st. Treborough Tip commenced operations, accepting refuse from Williton and Watchet and also Minehead U.D.C. Rydon and Pin-spit Quarries were closed and work commenced to cover them down. Rodhuish remained open with a small amount of tipping space available for emergencies. This proved to be a valuable amenity on two occasions when the Treborough tip was forced temporarily to close because of fires. At the end of 1972 Rodhuish Tip itself was receiving top soil in order to be covered down.

The Deposit of Poisonous Waste Act 1972 came into force during the year: part of this legislation requires that notification be given to the authorities of the intention to 'deposit waste on land , or cause or permit waste to be deposited on land, where the waste is of a kind which is poisonous, noxious or polluting and its presence on the land is liable to give rise to an environmental hazard'. This has had its ramifications in your district, in that certain waste products of factories accustomed to tipping at Treborough, have been assessed by the Institute of Geological Sciences as material coming within the definition of the Act. The firms concerned have been advised to acquaint themselves with the provisions and Regulations of the Act, and the quarry owner has been requested to seek the advice of the Public Health Department if called upon to accept such waste.

Referring once again to refuse collection, in early June a vehicle fitter started work on the staff of the Public Health Department, the present vehicle store shed being equipped with all the tools and machinery, such as a compressor, grinding machines, greasing equipment, air lines,

etc., to enable the fitter to carry out all maintenance and repair work to the Council's vehicles except major work requiring their return to the factory. The fitter has been more than fully employed since his arrival, and the wisdom of initiating such a scheme has been well borne out by the saving in time and the cost of bills from outside contractors. The fitter has proved to be very able, and has exercised some ingenuity in keeping the vehicles on the road.

On December 18th. the Department took delivery of a new 20 cu. yd. refuse vehicle to replace the old T.N., which has been taken off the road and partially dismantled for the use of spare parts. This move should again prove sound economics, as the department now has two virtually new vehicles, the Pakamatic and the TBN, both under a three year guarantee which should help considerably in keeping down the cost of running the refuse collection service.

Other items dealt with under the Public Health Acts include investigations into complaints of a varying nature, such as nuisances from smoke, dirty public conveniences, fouled water supplies, and it seems that the nose is the most sensitive of man's sense organs, as many complaints seem first to have advertised themselves by their odour, such as nasty smells on landings (dead rats) smells from dead animals in fields and on shore, and offensive smells from pigs. The animal kingdom was to blame also in several cases of disinfestation and disinfection of premises, with plagues of flies being most common.

4. Housing Acts.

Items dealt with under housing include statistics in respect of the stock of houses in the district, those built during the year, and those in course of erection, those demolished, closed, or otherwise declared unfit. Information is also given about housing grants and qualification certificates.

Housing Stock.

	<u>Total number</u>	<u>Erected during year</u>	<u>In course of erection</u>
Private Enterprise	4277	35	67
Local Authority	802	-	-
Local Authority (Old People's houses)	251	30	26
	<u>5330</u>	<u>65</u>	<u>93</u>

Housing Action.

Items dealt with as Public Health matters under the various Housing Acts include the placing of two Closing Orders on unfit cottages, **Section 16 of the 1957 Housing Act**, which resulted in their voluntary demolition, and Closing Orders on two others, one of these being the substitution for a Demolition Order previously made, on the undertaking by the owner for the property to be used for farm storage only. One building of wooden construction, long uninhabited and in a very bad state of repair was the subject of a Demolition Order under Section 17 of the 1957 Housing Act, and was demolished by contract labour on behalf of the Council.

Other notices served, of both a formal and informal nature, dealt with the provision of satisfactory drainage systems, inspection of premises for fitness for occupation and general items of disrepair, the latter usually under the provisions of the Qualification Certificate procedure. Landlords of properties under controlled tenancies may apply to the Rent Officer for a change to a regulated tenancy to enable a higher rent, if justified, to be charged, and for this purpose a Qualification Certificate is required. This is to ensure that rents will not be increased on properties which do not reach the standards of good repair and fitness for occupation required by the legislation. The Public Health Department, responsible for administering this legislation ensures the standard is met by the inspection of properties and issuing notices stipulating the work to be done in the case of unfit houses.

Legislation introduced in the Housing Finance Act 1972 has resulted in changes in the qualification procedure, whereby, if a landlord wishes to increase the rent of a property by changing it from a controlled tenancy to a regulated one, he may proceed with improvements necessary without prior issue of a certificate from the Council approving of the works, or may, if such a certificate has been sought, depart from the plans and specifications set out in his application, providing that the work when completed will bring the property to the desired standard. It remains the responsibility of the Public Health Department to ensure that all such dwellings reach this standard, and to refuse to issue qualification certificates when necessary.

In June 1972 notice was given by the Department of the Environment that Local Authorities were no longer required to make returns of applications made and approvals given in respect of qualification certificates, but although the numerical records are not maintained, details of all steps taken in implementing the procedure are registered.

Discretionary & Standard Grants.

At a time when criticism is increasing of the abuses by some applicants of the 1969 Housing Act, under which grants are made, by the device of obtaining maximum grants in order to obtain large profits by the immediate resale of improved properties, it is interesting to note the standard procedure adopted by this Council. A letter of enquiry regarding the future use of the property concerned is sent to all applicants for improvement grants requiring them to state whether the dwelling will be permanently occupied by themselves, be let to a permanent tenant, or used for holiday purposes. It is the Council's intention that properties destined for use as 'second homes', or to be let for holiday accommodation, should be restricted to receiving standard grants only. The signing of a declaration would perhaps not deter the unscrupulous, but would help to allocate the grant monies available more fairly to those desirous of providing themselves, or others, with permanent homes from sub-standard properties.

As more people become aware of the legislation under which they may benefit in their search for a home, we should see an increase in numbers of applications, although this trend is not reflected in the statistics for 1972, which in numbers, are very similar to the previous year; however, the average amount of grant money paid out per dwelling is considerably higher. It is the Public Health Department's policy, that where the provision of a damp proof course is necessary in the improvement of a property, to require the use of the electro-osmosis or other chemical method of damp proofing. This is a more expensive method than others previously employed, but is considered to be most effective and all types of this treatment are guaranteed by the firms installing them. This would account for a certain rise in the general level in the cost of grants, but undoubtedly the main reason is the continued rise in the cost of both labour and materials, which will certainly result in a bigger allocation of grant monies being sought for the coming year, if all applicants for grants are to be satisfied.

Grants - Discretionary.

Applications received totalled 63 for the year, and 44 grants were approved, the average cost of these being £536. Payments of £21,068 were made on 40 completed applications, averaging £527.

Grants - Standard.

There were 11 applications for standard grants, and 13 grants were approved for a total of £2996 at an average of £230. £1830 was paid out for 7 dwellings at an average of £261.

Comparison of these figures with last year's will demonstrate the way the costs are rising.

5. Food and Drugs Act.

In view of the area covered by your district, and taking into account the extent of the tourist trade during the summer, surprisingly few complaints were received necessitating action under the above legislation. There were only five complaints, all concerned with the purchase of items of food not of the quality demanded. All cases were thoroughly investigated, and enquiries made of manufacturers and retailers. No formal notices were issued and no prosecutions ensued , but advice was given to the shop keepers and wholesalers in respect of attention to be paid to the rotation of stock and the shelf life of the products involved.

Routine inspection of food premises continued through the year, resulting in thirteen notices being served. Infringements generally involved dirty conditions in food preparation areas, bad lighting conditions, and lack of facilities for washing in toilets, etc. Revisits were made in all cases, to ensure that notices served had been complied with, no further action being required.

6. Slaughterhouse Acts.

Routine inspections of the five slaughterhouses in the district have been made and 100% meat inspection maintained. Although kill numbers are down slightly on last year's, administration of the service has taken up more time, as the volume of kill has been redistributed over different slaughterhouses. One slaughterhouse, although licensed, remains unused, and numbers have fallen slightly at the largest of the slaughterhouses, while another has increased its kill, and the fourth, hitherto with almost no kill at all, has started slaughtering fairly regularly. Meat inspection fees, charged at the statutory maximum, brought in an income for the year of £879.00.

Statistics in respect of animals killed, numbers affected with disease, etc., are as follows;

Numbers killed and Inspected.

<u>Cattle</u> <u>excluding cows</u>	<u>Cows</u>	<u>Calves</u>	<u>Sheep</u>	<u>Pigs</u>
2094	15	15	7834	3953

Diseases.

Cysticercus Bovis.

Eight cattle were found to be affected by this disease, but only one carcase was generally infected and totally condemned, the others being released after the statutory period in cold store to render them fit for consumption. The total weight condemned, including the one carcase, was 770 lbs.

Tuberculosis.

One head and tongue of cattle weighing 40 lbs was condemned, and parts of eight pigs, principally the heads, the usual site of infection in pigs, were condemned at a weight of 89 lbs. Percentages affected of total numbers killed were .05 for cattle and .20 for pigs.

Other Diseases.

	<u>Cattle</u>	<u>Cows</u>	<u>Calves</u>	<u>Sheep</u>	<u>Pigs</u>
Weight Condemned	4107	40	122	2266	2568
Whole carcasses Condemned	1	-	3	6	7
Fart Carcasses Condemned	309	3	2	520	359
Percentage of kill affected other than C.B. or T.B.	14.8	20.0	33.0	6.7	9.3

7. Prevention of Damage by Pests Act.

The work of the Council's rodent operative is dealt with under this legislation, the Act being for the 'prevention of damage by rats, mice, insects and mites', which covers not only rodents, but bees, wasps, hornets, bugs, fleas, flies, silver fish, and cockroaches, these being the types of pest dealt with free of charge to members of the public. A charge is made to business premises on the basis of labour costs, materials used and mileage covered on each visit made. With a further 19 premises, mainly farms, being serviced on a contract basis, including a contribution from Watchet U.D.C., total income from rodent control in 1972 came to £591.00. Despite efforts in previous years by the rodent operative, wasps and bees continue to swarm unabated. Treatments were also given against infestations of cockroaches.

Despite the volume of work requiring constant attention, time was found in the latter part of the year to carry out a full programme of sewer test baiting in all the major villages in the district, which task has been completed by the rodent operative with the assistance of one part time employee. 'Takes', necessitating a follow up of poison baiting, were recorded at only four villages, Bicknoller, Dunster Marsh, Stogursey, and Timberscombe.

Only one notice was required to be served under this legislation, an informal letter to a private resident directing him to remove an accumulation of rubbish from his premises which was harbouring an infestation of rats.

8. Civic Amenities Act, 1967.

The removal of abandoned vehicles and other rubbish dumped is dealt with under this act. The Council are empowered to remove such items from the highway or Council land, after the observance of the various provisions of the Act, and may remove them from private land if no objection is received from the owner of the land. Owners of the vehicles, if traced, are charged for the labour and administrative charges incurred in the removal. Those requiring the removal of unwanted vehicles may ask the Council to arrange collection and disposal to the tip on payment of a £3.00 fee. Alternatively, if they are able to arrange their own transport, they may remove them to the tip free of charge. A good number have availed themselves of this opportunity, while all traced owners of abandoned cars are requested to remove them or become subject to the penalties of the Act. All cases of complaints received from the public in respect of abandoned vehicles were investigated, and the procedures of the Act adopted.

An income of £63 was derived for the year from charges made for removal of cars and parts of cars to tip.

9. Offices, Shops, and Railway Premises Act 1963.

No complaints requiring to be dealt with under this Act were received, but routine inspections were carried out during the year. It was not found necessary to issue any notices under these regulations. No reports of accidents were received in the department, nor of any new registrations of premises under this Act, with the consequent preservation of the status quo.

10. Caravan Sites, etc., Acts.

Inspections and visits have been maintained throughout the year to all classes of caravan sites affected by the above acts. Visits to residential sites include those to the Church View Caravan Park, administered by this department, and the largest of the three such multiple sites licensed. A further six residential sites are licensed for the stationing of single vans only, one site is licensed for a single seasonal van, and there are seven such sites with more than one caravan.

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Caravan Sites, cont.

Other types of sites dealt with are gipsy sites, of which two are projected, and 'exempted sites', which are sites exempted for a variety of reasons from requiring a site licence issued by the authority in whose area they are situated.

Of the two gipsy sites, one at Wick Park Covert, with plans for four pitches, and one at Farringdon Hill Lane for ten pitches, both in Stogursey Parish, only the latter comes under the jurisdiction of the R.D.C. Wick Park is solely the responsibility of the County Council, who have now also purchased the land at Farringdon Hill, which site will be administered by the R.D.C. on completion. The plans have been drawn up and after much discussion on details of design and materials to be used on ancillary buildings, water supplies, etc., agreement has been reached to go ahead with the construction work, although this had not started up to the end of 1972.

Exempted sites include seven in the district which have been certificated by The Caravan Club, Ltd., who are responsible for seeing that the provisions of the Caravan Sites and Control of Development Act 1960 are carried out. The local authority retains all power of inspection and direction to the site owner requiring him to correct all infringements of the regulations, and may refer offenders to the issuing organisation, who can withdraw certificates, which have a yearly duration. Sites of this type are only of a holiday or seasonal nature, and the exempted organisations have no power to issue certificates for residential sites.

The maximum number of holiday makers resident at one time at sites licensed by the Council is estimated at 3,500. The sites are fully occupied during the season, with a further unknown number using sites of a more transient nature, staying only one night, and the problem of insufficient accommodation remains. No progress is reported in 1972 on the proposed Touring Caravan Site at Carhampton but later news suggests that construction takes place in 1973.

A sign of the times has been the receipt in 1972 of detailed recommendations from the Department of Health and Social Security on public health procedures to adopt upon the advent of a large pop festival in the district, with its attendant problems of sanitation and refuse. Although the frontiers of pop music are pushing westwards, the public health department have so far escaped the task of wrestling with this duty.

11. Animal Boarding Establishments Act, 1963.

The same three establishments as last year remain licensed, and inspection of all three reveals no infringements of the Act. Their total capacity at one time is for eighteen cats and six dogs, and, providing as they do, very useful service, are all well patronised.

12. Noise Abatement Act.

Three complaints only concerning excessive noise were received by the department. Two alleged a nuisance from noisy machinery, and were duly investigated, but it was not found necessary to issue either informal or formal notices to abate the nuisance. A complaint of excessive noise from children playing on a derelict car in a recreation ground was dealt with by the simple expedient of requesting its removal to tip, and in fact it was eventually removed by the Council for a fee of £3.00.

13. Water Supplies and Sampling.

A full programme of water sampling was maintained throughout the year, both by the R.D.C. and the West Somerset Water Board. Below is given a table of all results, followed by comments on each section.

<u>Raw Water</u>				<u>Treated Water</u>			
<u>Bacteriological</u>		<u>Chemical</u>		<u>Bacteriological</u>		<u>Chemical</u>	
<u>S.</u>	<u>U.</u>	<u>S.</u>	<u>U.</u>	<u>S.</u>	<u>U.</u>	<u>S.</u>	<u>U.</u>
130	37	33	1	136	13	19	1

<u>Well Water</u>			
<u>Bacteriological</u>		<u>Chemical</u>	
<u>S.</u>	<u>U.</u>	<u>S.</u>	<u>U.</u>
4	5	-	-

S. = Satisfactory
U. = Unsatisfactory

Generally speaking, supplies have been of good quality, and despite the very dry year experienced, no shortage of water was reported, although there is no doubt that smaller private supplies relying on spring water as their source would have had some difficulty in maintaining an adequate supply. The unsatisfactory results obtained from raw water samples were usually due to faecal contamination, which is in most cases caused by animal droppings from farm stock grazing in the proximity of the source. The trouble is generally encountered during spells of wet weather, when the contamination is carried by rain water into the supplies. Owners of such supplies are advised to avoid the keeping of stock in these areas, and to ensure the source is kept in a clean and orderly state, as decaying vegetable matter may also give rise to contamination. The village of Luxborough, with its long-standing supply problem, and the scene of some recent television reporting on the matter, contributed several samples of unfit raw water.

The samples of treated water, showed, as one might expect, fewer unsatisfactory results, and these were confined to tests at some half dozen properties, and included re-testing of one or two individual supplies. They were due in all cases either to the underchlorination of filter plants, or breakdowns in the apparatus, and were all quickly rectified.

The two chemical failures were caused by excessive iron in the water from the raw supply, caused by corrosion in the pipes, and contamination by lead and copper picked up from the plumbing system in the case of the treated water. The owner of the former was advised to consider abandoning the present system, and supply the properties affected with mains water from the West Somerset Water Board. In the latter case, the sample was taken late in the year, and investigations are continuing into 1973, with emphasis on the desirability of correcting the acidity of the water at source.

cont.....

Water Supplies, cont.

The unsatisfactory samples obtained from well supplies included the perennially poor supply at Luxborough, whose owner has again been informed of the position. It seems that supplies such as this will continue to give poor results until such times as a mains supply for the village is provided by the West Somerset Water Board. The Board would be prepared to install this service, providing a satisfactory contribution was received from the Council, and matters are proceeding on these lines, but a decision had yet to be reached at the end of 1972.

Three unsatisfactory results were obtained on separate occasions from one property, but advice was given that the source of the problem was the surrounding area at the top of the well and also the adjacent septic tank, both of which were causing contamination of the well, and required thorough cleansing.

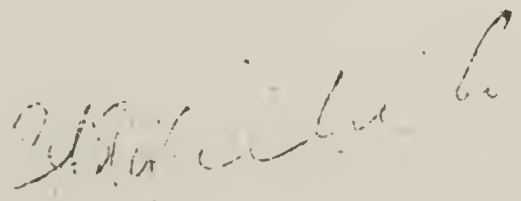
Several samples have been taken during the year at the request of purchasers and would be purchasers of older property wishing to satisfy themselves and their mortgagors of the purity of the water supply to the premises, and satisfactory results have been obtained from single tests, but it is the custom of the department to point out that a series of samples would be required to establish the continuing purity of such supplies.

Diseases of Animals (Waste Foods) Order, 1957.

Only two establishments were operating under the above legislation at the beginning of 1972, and one further temporary licence was issued for a period of three months during the year, but on its expiry no further application was received from the licensee, and the establishment was deemed to be unlicensed. The other two plants were found on inspection to be operating satisfactorily; stress was placed on the importance of strict standards of cleanliness and hygiene, with rigid separation of uncooked food from the boiled material to prevent the risk of the spread of disease.

This concludes the report for 1972; a report which reveals the volume and scope of the department's activities. The staff maintain a good relationship with the public and answer all calls for assistance and advice. With reorganisation fast approaching the department's work will not be less, with a good deal of preparatory work required to achieve a smooth amalgamation with the other districts in 1974. I am confident that this will successfully be brought about.

Yours faithfully,



Dr. C.F.R. Killick, M.B., Ch. B.

M. O. H.

